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SAMANTABHADRA

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A Scrapbook of Internet Resources on

The Bodhisattva Universal Worthy

*A free e-book
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May be distributed freely*

March 2004, CE



DEDICATION

*May I never be separated from the good friends
Who reveal the path of sublime ways
And who wish only to benefit me
May I never disappoint them even for a moment.*



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PRAISE TO SAMANTABHADRA BODHISATTVA

*The Bodhisattva of Great Conduct is called Universal Worthy.
The Sea of his vow power is multi-layered without bounds.
With dignity he reposes upon a six-tusked elephant.
By wisdom he is born, transformationally,
from a lotus of the seven gems.
In all Samadhis, he attains sovereignty.
His originally wonderful virtue is pervasive and perfected.
Praises of this jewelled awesomeness arrive to teach the Saha World.
His efficacious response and spiritual power
shake the great-thousand realm.
Homage to Universally Worthy
Bodhisattva of Great Conduct,
who dwells in the silver world
of Emei Shan.*



THE LOTUS SUTRA

CHAPTER 28: Encouragement Of Samantabhadra

http://lotus.nichirenshu.org/lotus/sutra/english/watson/lsw_chap28.htm

At that time Bodhisattva Universal worthy, famed for his freely exercised transcendental powers, dignity and virtue, in company with great bodhisattvas in immeasurable, boundless, indescribable numbers, arrived from the east. The lands that he passed through one and all quaked and trembled, jeweled lotus flowers rained down, and immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of different kinds of music played. In addition, numberless heavenly beings, dragons yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, human and nonhuman beings surrounded him in a great assembly, each displaying his dignity, virtue, and transcendental powers.

When [Bodhisattva Universal Worthy] arrived in the midst of Mount Gridhrakuta in the saha world, he bowed his head to the ground in obeisance to Shakyamuni Buddha, circled around him to the right seven times, and said to the Buddha: 'World-Honored One, when I was in the land of the Buddha King Above Jeweled Dignity and Virtue, from far away I heard the Lotus Sutra being preached in this saha world. In company with this multitude of immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of bodhisattvas I have come to listen to and accept it. I beg that the World-Honored One will preach it for us. And good men and good women in the time after the Thus Come One has entered extinction--how will they be able to acquire this Lotus Sutra?'

The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Universal Worthy: "If good men and good women will fulfill four conditions in the time after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, then they will be able to acquire this Lotus Sutra. First, they must be protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas. Second, they must plant the roots of virtue. Third, they must enter the stage where they are sure of reaching enlightenment. Fourth, they must conceive a determination to save all living beings. If good men and good women fulfill these four conditions, then after the Thus Come One has entered extinction they will be certain to acquire this sutra."

At that time Bodhisattva Universal Worthy said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, in the evil and corrupt age of the last five-hundred-year period, if there is someone who accepts and upholds this sutra, I will guard and protect him, free him from decline and harm, see that he attains peace and tranquility, and make certain that no one can spy out and take advantage of his shortcomings, no devil, devil's son, devil's daughter, devil's minion, or one possessed by the devil, no yaksha, raksasa, kumbhanda, pishacha, kritiya, putana, vetada, or other being that torments humans will be able to take advantage of him.

"Whether that person is walking or standing, if he reads and recites this sutra, then at that time I will mount my six-tusked kingly white elephant and with my multitude of great bodhisattvas will proceed to where he is. I will manifest myself, offer alms, guard and protect him, and bring comfort to his mind. I will do this because I too want to offer alms to the Lotus Sutra. If when that person is seated he ponders this sutra, at that time too I will mount my kingly white elephant and manifest myself in his presence. If that person should forget a single phrase or verse of the Lotus Sutra, I will prompt him and join him in reading and reciting so that he will gain understanding. At that time the person who accepts, upholds, reads and recites the Lotus Sutra will be able to see my body, will be filled with great joy, and will apply himself with greater diligence than ever. Because he has seen me, he will immediately acquire samadhis and dharanis. These are called the repetition dharani, the hundred, thousand, ten thousand, million repetition dharani, and the Dharma sound expedient dharani. He will acquire dharanis such as these.

"World-Honored One, in that later time, in the evil and corrupt age of the last five-hundred-year period, if monks, nuns, laymen believers or laywomen believers who seek out, accept, uphold, read, recite, and transcribe this Lotus Sutra should wish to practice it, they should do so diligently and with a single mind for a period of twenty-one days. When the twenty-one days have been fulfilled, I will mount my six-tusked white elephant and, with immeasurable numbers of bodhisattvas surrounding me

and with this body that all living beings delight to see, I will manifest myself in the presence of the person and preach the Law for him, bringing him instruction, benefit, and joy. I will also give him dharani spells. And because he has acquired these spells, no nonhuman being will be able to injure him and he cannot be confused or lead astray by women. I too will personally guard him at all times. Therefore, World-Honored One, I hope you will permit me to pronounce these dharanis." Then in the presence of the Buddha he pronounced these spells:

*adande dandapati dandavarte dandakushale dandasudhare
sudhare sudharapati buddhapashyane sarvadharani-avartani
sarvandhashyavartani su-avartani samghaparikshani
samghanarghatani asamge samgapagate tri-adhvasamgatulya-
arate-prapty savasamgasamatikrante sarvadharmasuparikshite
sarvasattvarutakaushalyanugate simhavikridite*

"World-Honored One, if any bodhisattva is able to hear these dharanis, he should understand that it is due to the transcendental powers of Universal Worthy. If when the Lotus Sutra is propagated throughout Jambudvīpa there are those who accept and uphold it, they should think to themselves: This is all due to the authority and supernatural power of Universal Worthy! If there are those who accept this sutra, memorize it correctly, understand its principles, and practice it as the sutra prescribes, these persons should know that they are carrying out the practices of Universal Worthy himself. In the presence of immeasurable, boundless members of Buddhas they will have planted good roots deep in the ground, and the hands of the Thus Come Ones will pat them on the head.

"If they do no more than copy the sutra, when their lives come to an end they will be reborn in the Trayāstrimśa heaven. At that time eighty-four thousand heavenly women, performing all kinds of music, will come to greet them. Such persons will put on crowns made of seven treasures amidst the ladies-in-waiting will amuse and enjoy themselves. How much more so, then, if they accept, uphold, read and recite the sutra, memorize it correctly, understand its principles, when the lives of these persons come to an end, they will be received into the hands of a thousand Buddhas, who will free them from all fear and keep them from falling into the evil paths of existence. Immediately they will proceed to the Tushita heaven, to the place of Bodhisattva Maitreya. Bodhisattva Maitreya possesses the thirty-two features and is surrounded by a multitude of great bodhisattvas. He has hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of heavenly women attendants,

and these persons will be reborn in their midst. Such will be the benefits and advantages they enjoy.

"Therefore persons of wisdom should single-mindedly copy the sutra themselves, or cause others to copy it, should accept, uphold, read, and recite it, memorize it correctly and practice it as the sutra prescribes. "World-Honored One, I now therefore employ my transcendental powers to guard and protect this sutra. And after the Thus Come One had entered extinction, I will cause it to be widely propagated throughout Jambudvīpa and will see that it never comes to an end."

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha spoke these words of praise: "Excellent, excellent, Universal Worthy! You are able to guard and assist this sutra and cause many living beings to gain peace and happiness and advantages. You have already acquired inconceivable benefits and profound great pity and compassion. Since long ages in the past you have shown a desire for anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and have taken a vow to use your transcendental powers to guard and protect this sutra. And I will employ my transcendental powers to guard and protect those who can accept and uphold the name of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy.

"Universal Worthy, if there are those who accept, uphold, read and recite this Lotus Sutra, memorize it correctly, practice and transcribe it, you should know that such persons have seen Shakyamuni Buddha. It is as though they heard his sutra from the Buddha's mouth. You should know that such persons have offered alms to Shakyamuni Buddha you should know that such persons have been patted on the head by Shakyamuni Buddha. You should know that such persons have been covered in the robes of Shakyamuni Buddha.

"They will no longer be greedy for or attached to worldly pleasures, they will have no taste for the scriptures or jottings of the non-Buddhists. They will take no pleasure in associating with such people, or with those engaged in evil occupations such as butchers, raisers of pigs sheep, chickens or dogs, hunters, or those who offer women's charms for sale. These persons will be honest and upright in mind and intent, correct in memory, and will possess the power of merit and virtue. They will not be troubled by the three poisons, nor will they be troubled by jealousy, self-importance, ill-founded conceit, or arrogance. These persons will have few desires, will be easily satisfied, and will know how to carry out the practices of Universal Worthy.

"Universal Worthy, after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, in the last five-hundred-year period, if you see someone who accepts, upholds reads, and recites the Lotus Sutra, you should think to yourself: Before long this person will proceed to the place of practice, conquer the devil hosts, and

attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. He will turn the wheel of the Dharma, beat the Dharma drum, and sound the Dharma conch, and rain down the Dharma rain. He is worthy to sit in the lion seat of the Dharma, amid the great assembly of heavenly and human beings.

"Universal Worthy, in later ages if there are those who accept, uphold, read, and recite this sutra, such persons will no longer be greedy for or attached to clothing, bedding, food and drink, or other necessities of daily life. Their wishes will not be in vain, and in this present existence they will gain the reward of good fortune. If there is anyone who disparages or makes light of them, saying, 'You are mere idiots! It is useless to carry out these practices--in the end they will gain you nothing!', then as punishment for his offense that person will be born eyeless in existence after existence. But if there is anyone who offers alms to them and praises them, then in this present existence he will have manifest reward for it.

"If anyone sees a person who accepts and upholds this sutra and tries to expose the faults or evils of that person, whether what he speaks is true or not, he will in his present existence be afflicted with white leprosy. If anyone disparages or laughs at that person, then in existence after existence he will have teeth that are missing or spaced far apart, ugly lips, a flat nose, hands and feet that are gnarled or deformed, and eyes that are squinty. His body will have a foul odor, with evil sores that run pus and blood, and he will suffer from water in the belly, shortness of breath, and other severe and malignant illnesses. Therefore, Universal Worthy, if you see a person who accepts and upholds this sutra, you should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha."

When this chapter on the Encouragements of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy was preached, bodhisattvas immeasurable and boundless as Ganges sands acquired dharanis allowing them to memorize a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a million repetitions of the teachings, and bodhisattvas equal to the dust particles of the thousand-million-fold world perfected the way of Universal Worthy.

When the Buddha preached this sutra, Universal Worthy and the other bodhisattvas, Sâriputra and the other voice-hearers, along with the heavenly beings, dragons, humans and nonhuman beings--the entire membership of the great assembly were all filled with great joy. Accepting and upholding the words of the Buddha, they bowed in obeisance and departed.



THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA
(THE AVATAMSAKA SUTRA)
Chapter 40

<http://www.amitabha.com>

**The Chapter on Entering the Inconceivable State Of
 Liberation of the Conduct and Vows of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva**

*Translated on Imperial Command by the T'ang Dynasty
 Tripitaka Master Prajna of Kubha*

Part 1: Universal Worthy's Ten Great Vows

http://www.amitabha.com/sutras/flower_adornment/part_1/flower_1.htm

At that time, Universal Worthy Bodhisattva Mahasattva, having praised the Thus Come One's merit and virtue, told all the Bodhisattvas and Sudhana:

"Kind sir, if all the Buddhas in the ten directions were to speak continuously of the Thus Come One's merits and virtues for as many aeons as there are

fine dust-motes in an incalculable number of Buddha-lands, those virtues could not be fully described.

"Those wishing to attain such merit and virtue should make and carry out ten Great and Profound Vows. What are they?"

- To pay homage to and respect all Buddhas.
- To praise the Thus Come Ones.
- To make abundant offerings.
- To repent of and overcome karmic obstacles.
- To rejoice in all merits and virtues.
- To request the turning of the Dharma wheel.
- To request that the Buddhas remain in the world.
- To study always with the Buddhas.
- To be in harmony with living beings always.
- To transfer all merit and virtue.

Sudhana asked: "Great Sage! What is the meaning of the words beginning with 'To pay homage' and ending with 'merit and virtue'?"

The First Vow: To pay homage to and respect all Buddhas.

Universal Worthy Bodhisattva told Sudhana:

"Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'to pay homage to and respect all Buddhas' is as follows:

"All Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, are as numerous as the number fine dust-motes that exist in all Buddha-lands in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, extending to the outer edges of the Dharma Realm and the cosmic void. But because of the power of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's practices and vows, I have profound faith in those Buddhas and truly believe in them, just as if they were standing right before my eyes. With the karma of my body, mouth and mind completely purified, I constantly pay homage to them.

"In each and every place where there are Buddhas, I manifest transformation bodies as numerous as the number of fine dust-motes in incalculable numbers of Buddha-lands. Each of these bodies everywhere pays homage to and respects Buddhas who are as numerous as the fine dust-motes in

incalculable Buddha-lands. When the realm of empty space is exhausted, my homage and respect will be exhausted. But because the realm of empty space is inexhaustible, my homage and respect will never end. In the same way, when the realms of living beings, the karma of living beings, and the afflictions of living beings are exhausted, my homage and respect will be exhausted. But the realms of living beings, the karma of living beings, and the afflictions of living beings are inexhaustible. Therefore, my homage and respect are inexhaustible. They continue in thought after thought without ceasing. My body, mouth, and mind never tire of doing these things."

The Second Vow: To praise the Thus Come Ones.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'to praise the Thus Come Ones' is as follows:

"In each fine dust-mote in all lands in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, to the outer edges of the Dharma Realm and the cosmic void, there are Buddhas as numerous as the number of fine dust-motes in all worlds. Each of these Buddhas is circumambulated by an assembly of Bodhisattvas as vast as an ocean. And with my profound and supreme understanding, I know and see them all. Each of my bodies manifests a tongue of subtle and wonderful eloquence, surpassing the skillful speech of even Sarasvati. Each tongue brings forth an inexhaustible sea of sounds, and each sound emits an ocean of words, praising and glorifying all the Thus Come Ones' seas of merit and virtue. These praises continue without cessation to the end of time. To the outer edges of the Dharma Realm, these sounds reach everywhere.

"When the cosmic void is exhausted, and when the karma of living beings is exhausted, and when the afflictions of living beings are exhausted, only then will my praise be exhausted. But just as the realm of empty space and the afflictions of living beings are endless, so too are my praises endless. They continue in thought after thought without cessation, with my body, mouth, and mind never tiring."

The Third Vow: To make abundant offerings.

"Moreover, Kind sir, this is the meaning of the words 'to make abundant offerings' is as follows:

"In every dust-mote in all the Buddha-lands in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, extending to the outer edges of the Dharma Realm and the cosmic void, there are Buddhas as numerous as the fine dust-motes that fill all worlds. Each Buddha is circumambulated by an assembly of Bodhisattvas as vast as an ocean. Because of the power of Universal Worthy's practice and vows, I deeply believe in those Buddhas and perceive them as if they were standing before me. To each one I make offerings of superb and wonderful gifts, including bouquets of flowers, bouquets of garlands, choruses of heavenly music, miles of divine tapestries, a myriad of celestial garments, every variety of heavenly incense, fragrant balms, burning incense, and an abundance of other gifts such as these, each collection as large as Sumeru, the King of Mountains.

"I burn all kinds of lamps: butter lamps, oil lamps, and lamps of many fragrant oils. The wick of each lamp is as tall as Mount Sumeru, and each lamp contains as much oil as there are waters in a great sea. With all manner of gifts such as these, I shall make offerings always.

"Kind sir, the supreme offering among all offerings is the gift of Dharma: That is to say, the offering of cultivating according to the Teachings, the offering of benefiting all living beings, the offering of embracing and sustaining all living beings, the sacrifice of suffering the torments of all beings, the offering of diligently cultivating good roots, the offering of not forsaking the the Bodhisattva-duty or the Bodhi Mind.

"Kind sir, the immeasurable merit and virtue gained from making material offerings does not equal one part in a hundred, one part in a thousand, one part in a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas, one part in a kala, one part determined through reckoning or calculation, one part that can be demonstrated by comparison, or one part in an Upanishad, when compared with the merit and virtue gained from a single thought of offering the gift of Dharma. Why is this? Because all the Thus Come Ones honor the Dharma; indeed all Buddhas are begotten by the Dharma; they become perfect through the making of offerings to the Dharma. In this way, the Bodhisattvas present the truest and noblest of gifts to the Thus Come Ones.

"When the cosmic void is exhausted, when the realms of living beings are exhausted, when the karma of living beings is exhausted, and when the afflictions of living beings come to an end, only then will my making of offerings come to an end. But just as the cosmic void and the afflictions of

beings are endless, so too are my making of offerings. In thought after thought without cessation, my body, mouth, and mind never grow weary of these deeds."

The Fourth Vow: To repent of and overcome karmic obstacles.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'repent of and overcome karmic obstacles' is as follows:

"The Bodhisattva reflected: 'From beginningless aeons in the past, I have created immeasurable and boundless evil karma with my body, mouth, and mind, because of greed, hatred, and stupidity. If this evil karma had a substance and form, the entire cosmic void could not contain it.'

"I will now completely purify these three karmas, and before the assemblies of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, throughout the Dharma Realm in lands as numerous as fine dust-motes, I sincerely confess and repent my offenses and vow never to commit them again. I will dwell forever more in the merit and virtue of the pure Precepts."

"So it is that when the cosmic void is exhausted, the realms of living beings are exhausted, the karma of living beings is exhausted, and the afflictions of living beings are exhausted, then my repentance will be exhausted. But just as the cosmic void and the afflictions of living beings are endless, so too are my repentance and reform. They continue in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth, and mind never tire of these deeds."

The Fifth Vow: To rejoice in all merits and virtues.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words, 'to rejoice in all merits and virtues' is as follows:

"All the Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, as numerous as the fine dust-motes in all the Buddha-lands in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, to the outer edges of the Dharma Realm and the cosmic void, since the time of their initial resolve for all wisdom, have diligently cultivated accumulations of merits without regard for their bodies or their lives. They have done this throughout aeons as numerous as fine dust-motes in incalculable Buddha-lands. During each aeon they have sacrificed their

heads, eyes, hands, and feet, as many times as there are dust-motes in incalculable Buddha-lands.

"In this way they have performed many difficult austerities and have perfected the gates of the various paramitas. They have entered and have mastered each of the Bodhisattva grounds of wisdom and have accomplished the unsurpassed Bodhi of the Buddhas. Upon their Parinirvana, their sharira have been divided and distributed. I am completely in harmony with them and rejoice in all of their good roots.

"Moreover, as for all the different kinds of beings in the six states of existence and those born from the four kinds of birth in every world in the ten directions, I am in harmony with them also, and I rejoice in their merits and virtues as well, even if they are as small as dust-motes. I am completely in harmony with and rejoice in the merits and virtues of all the sound-hearers, the Pratyeka Buddhas, the learners, and the thoroughly learned ones in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time. I am in harmony with and rejoice in the vast and great merit and virtue of all Bodhisattvas who, in pursuit of attaining the highest unsurpassed goal of Bodhi, perform austerities difficult beyond measure.

"So it is that even if the cosmic void is exhausted, and the afflictions of living beings are exhausted, my being in harmony and rejoicing are endless. They continue in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth, and mind never tire of these deeds."

The Sixth Vow: To request the turning of the Dharma wheel.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'to request the turning of the Dharma wheel' is as follows:

"Within each and every fine dust-mote in the Buddha-lands in all of the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, throughout the Dharma Realm and the cosmic void, there are as many vast and great Buddha-lands as there are fine dust-motes in incalculable Buddha-lands. In each and every land, in thought after thought, there are Buddhas attaining equal and proper enlightenment, their number as great as the number of fine dust-motes in incalculable Buddha-lands. An assembly of Bodhisattvas as vast as the ocean circumambulates each Buddha. Using all the power and eloquence of

my body, mouth, and mind, I unceasingly request that they turn the wonderful Dharma wheel.

"So it is that even if the cosmic realm comes to an end, even if the realms of living beings come to an end, even if the karma of living beings is exhausted, and even if the afflictions of living beings come to an end, my request that all Buddhas turn the wheel of proper Dharma will not come to an end. It will continue in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth, and mind will never grow weary of these deeds."

The Seventh Vow: To request that the Buddhas remain in the world.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'to request that the Buddhas remain in the world' is as follows:

"All Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, are as numerous as fine dust-motes in all Buddha-lands in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, to the outer edges of the Dharma Realm and the cosmic void. When they are about to enter Parinirvana, along with all Bodhisattvas, sound-hearers, Pratyeka Buddhas, learners, and thoroughly learned ones, including all good knowing advisors, I ask them all not to enter nirvana. I request that they remain in the world for as many aeons as there are fine dust-motes in all Buddha-lands, bringing benefit and bliss to all living beings.

"So it is that even if the cosmic void comes to an end, the realms of living beings come to an end, and the afflictions of living beings are exhausted, still my request will continue. It will continue in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth, and mind will never grow weary of these deeds."

The Eighth Vow: To study always with the Buddhas.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'to study always with the Buddhas'."

"I will be like Vairochana, the Thus Come One of this saha world, who, from the time he first resolved [to attain Buddhahood], never retreated from its demands. He sacrificed countless, incalculable numbers of bodies and lives. He peeled off his skin for paper, split his bones to fashion brushes, drew blood for ink, and wrote out Sutras stacked as high as Mount Sumeru.

Because he valued the Dharma, he did not shirk from sacrificing his own body or life. How much less did he lust after a king's throne, cities, towns, palaces, gardens, groves, or any material things at all! Rather, he drove himself to the limit in performing many kinds of difficult austerities.

"He attained the Great Enlightenment beneath the Tree, manifested various exalted powers, manifested many kinds of transformations, made different kinds of Buddha bodies appear, and dwelt in various kinds of assemblies. He dwelt amidst assemblies of great Bodhisattvas, and amidst assemblies of wheel-turning kings and of lesser kings and their retinues. He dwelt amidst great assemblies of kshatriyas, brahmins, elders, and lay people, and even amidst assemblies of gods, nagas, the eight groups of spiritual beings, humans, and non-humans. As he dwelt in various different assemblies such as these, he taught the Dharma to these beings in accordance with their inclinations and desires in a voice that was as full and perfect as a great clap of thunder, up until the time he entered nirvana.

"In all these ways I will learn from the Buddhas, not only Vairochana, the present World Honored One, but also from all the Thus Come Ones in every dust-mote in all the Buddha-lands in all the ten directions and throughout the three periods of time, to the outer edges of the Dharma realm and the cosmic void. In thought after thought, I will learn from them all.

"So it is that even if the cosmic void comes to an end, and the afflictions of living beings come to an end, still my study with the Buddhas will never end. It will continue in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth, and mind never grow weary of these deeds."

The Ninth Vow: To be in harmony with living beings always.

"Moreover, Sudhana, the explanation of the words 'to accommodate and benefit all living beings':"

"Throughout the oceans of worlds in all the ten directions, to the outer edges of the Dharma Realm and the cosmic realm, there are many different kinds of living beings: For instance, there are those born from eggs, those born from the womb, the transformationally born, and those who rely on earth, water, fire, and air for their existence. There are beings dwelling in space, and beings who are born in and live in plants and trees. Their number includes all the varieties of species and races with diverse kinds of bodies,

shapes, appearances, lifespans, families, names, and natures. They have many varieties of knowledge and views, various kinds of desires, pleasures, thoughts, and deeds, and many different kinds departments, dress, and diets.

"There are beings who dwell in different villages, towns, cities and palaces, as well as gods, nagas, and others who belong to the eight groups, humans and non-humans alike. There are footless beings, and beings with two feet, four feet, and many feet; with form and without form; with thought and without thought; and not entirely with thought and not entirely without thought. I will be in harmony with with and take care of all these many kinds of beings, providing all kinds of services and offerings for them. I will treat them with the same respect that I show my own parents, teachers, elders, Arhats, and even the Thus Come Ones. I will serve them all equally, without differentiation.

"I will be a good physician for the sick and suffering. I will lead those who have lost their way to the right road. I will be a bright light for those in the dark night, and will cause the poor and destitute to uncover hidden treasures. Bodhisattva impartially benefit all living beings in this manner.

"Why is this? If a Bodhisattva is in harmony with living beings, then that Bodhisattva is in harmony with and makes offerings to all Buddhas. If he can honor and serve living beings, then he can honor and serve the Thus Come Ones. When he brings joy to living beings, he brings joy to all Thus Come Ones. Why is this? It is because all Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, sustain themselves on the Mind of Great Compassion. Because of living beings, they develop Great Compassion. From Great Compassion the Bodhi Mind is born; and because of the Bodhi Mind, they attain Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.

"It is like a great regal tree growing in the rocks and sand in a barren wilderness. When the roots receive water, the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits all flourish. So it is with the regal Bodhi Tree growing in the wilderness of Birth and Death. All living beings are its roots, and all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are its flowers and fruits. When one quenches the thirst of all beings with the water of Great Compassion, one nourishes the flowers and fruits of the wisdom of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

"Why is this? Because, when Bodhisattvas quench the thirst of living beings with the water of Great Compassion, they attain Supreme, Perfect

Enlightenment. Therefore, Bodhi belongs to living beings. Without living beings, no Bodhisattva could achieve Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.

"Kind sir, you should understand these principles in this way: When one's mind is impartial towards all living beings, one can accomplish full and perfect Great Compassion. By using the Mind of Great Compassion to put oneself in harmony with living beings, one perfects the making of offerings to the Thus Come Ones. In this way, Bodhisattvas are always in harmony with living beings.

"Even when the cosmic void comes to an end, the realms of living beings are exhausted, the karma of living beings is exhausted, and the afflictions of living beings come to an end, I will remain in harmony with living beings always, continuously in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth, and mind never grow weary of these deeds.

The Tenth Vow: To transfer all merit and virtue.

"Moreover, Kind sir, the explanation of the words 'to transfer all merits and virtues' is as follows:

"All the merits and virtues [that I receive from fulfilling my Ten Vows], from my first Vow (to pay homage and respect all the Buddhas), to my final Vow (to accommodate and benefit all living beings), I universally transfer to all living beings throughout the Dharma Realm and to the outer edges of the cosmic void. I vow that all living beings will be constantly peaceful and happy without sickness or suffering. I vow that no one will succeed in committing any evil acts, but that all will quickly perfect their cultivation of good karma. I vow to shut the door on evil destinies and to open the right paths for humans, gods, and the attainment of nirvana. I will sacrifice myself for other beings and will suffer all the very bitter suffering which they bring about with their evil karma. I will liberate all these beings and will ultimately lead them to the attainment of unsurpassed Bodhi. Bodhisattvas perform the transference merit in this way.

"Even when the cosmic realm comes to an end, the realms of living beings come to an end, the karma of living beings is exhausted, and the afflictions of living beings come to an end, I will continue to transfer all merits and virtues endlessly, continuously, in thought after thought without cessation. My body, mouth and mind will never grow weary of these deeds."

Part Two

The Merit of Universal Worthy's Vows

http://www.amitabha.com/sutras/flower_adornment/part_2/flower_2.htm

"O virtuous one, these are the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy Mahasattva's Ten Great Vows in their entirety. If all Bodhisattvas can follow and abide by these Great Vows, then they will be able to bring all living beings to fruition [of the Bodhi] and guide them to the path of Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment. They can then fulfill Universal Worthy's ocean of conduct and vows. Therefore, O virtuous one, you should understand the meaning of all this.

"If a good man or good woman were to take the supremely wonderful seven jewels and pour them out until they fill as many worlds as there are very fine dust-motes in immeasurable, boundless, ineffably ineffable Buddha-lands throughout the ten directions; and if this person were also to bestow the greatest peace and happiness known to gods and men to every living being in these worlds; and if this person also were to offer the same gifts to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of all those worlds, doing so constantly and without cessation for as many kalpas as there are very fine dust-motes in those Buddha-lands, then that person would acquire much merit and virtue. But the merits and virtues gained from offering these gifts does not equal one part in one hundred, one part in one thousand, or even one part in an Upanishad, when compared with the merit and virtue of a person who hears these Kings of Vows pass by his ear just one time.

"Moreover, if a person receives and maintains these Great Vows with a mind of deep faith, reads and recites them, or writes out just a single four-line verse, he or she can quickly eradicate the karma of the five intermittent offenses. All the world's illnesses that afflict the body and mind, as well as the various kinds of bitter suffering, will be wiped clean, up to and including bad karmas equal to the number fine dust-motes in all Buddha-lands.

"All the demon-armies, the yakshas, rakshasas, kumbhandas, pishachas, bhutas, and so on, and all evil ghosts and spirits that drink blood and devour the flesh will move far away from this person. Or they will resolve, before long, to draw near and protect him. Therefore, if he recites these vows aloud, he will move freely through the world without obstruction, like the moon appearing through the clouds. All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will praise

him, people and gods will all bow in respect to him, and all living beings will make offerings to him. This noble one will easily be reborn as a human and will perfect all of Universal Worthy's merit and virtue. Before long, he will be just like Universal Worthy himself, obtaining a subtle and wonderful physical body complete with the thirty-two marks of a great person. If he is born among humans or gods, he will always live in a superior family. He will totally destroy the evil destinies and will depart from all bad companions. Fully capable of vanquishing all externalists, he will completely free himself from all afflictions, just as the lordly lion subdues all beasts. This person will be worthy of receiving the offerings of all living beings.

"Further, when a person is on the verge of death, at the last instant of life, when all faculties scatter and he departs from his relatives, when all power and status are lost and nothing survives, when his prime minister, great officials, his inner court and outer cities, his elephants, horses, carts, and treasuries of precious jewels can no longer accompany him, these Great Vows alone will stay with him. At all times they will guide him forward, and in a single instant he will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Arriving there, he will see Amitabha Buddha, Manjushri Bodhisattva, Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva who Contemplates at Ease, Maitreya Bodhisattva, and others. The appearance of these Bodhisattvas will be magnificent and their merits and virtues complete. Together they will surround him.

"This person will see himself born from a lotus flower and will receive a prediction of Buddhahood. Thereafter, he will pass through an immeasurable, incalculable number of aeons and, with his power of wisdom, he will accord with the minds of living beings in order to benefit them everywhere throughout the ineffably ineffable worlds in the ten directions.

"Before long he will sit in a Bodhimandala, subdue the demonic armies, accomplish Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment, and turn the wonderful Dharma wheel. He will cause living beings in worlds as numerous as the fine motes of dust in Buddha-lands to develop the Bodhi Mind. He will teach and transform them, in accordance with their inclinations and basic natures, and will bring them to fruition [in their enlightenment]. Until the oceans of future aeons are emptied, he will greatly benefit all living beings.

"O virtuous one, harbor no doubts about the merits and virtues obtained by living beings who hear and believe in these Great Kings of Vows. Reverently accept them; after accepting them, you should be able to read them; after becoming able to read them, you should be able to recite them aloud; and after becoming able to recite them aloud, you should be able to maintain them, to the extent that you can write them out and extensively explain them to others. Then, in a single thought, my practices and vows will be fulfilled."

"The blessings that one will thus obtain are immeasurable and boundless. One will be able to rescue living beings from the great sea of afflictions and suffering, releasing them from their bondage to be reborn in Amitabha Buddha's Land of Ultimate Bliss."

Part Three

Stanzas on Universal Worthy's Conduct and Vows

http://www.amitabha.com/sutras/flower_adornment/part_3/flower_3.htm

At that time, the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy Mahasattva, wishing to restate his meaning, contemplated everywhere in the ten directions and spoke in verse:

The First Vow: To pay homage to and respect all Buddhas.

Before the Lions Among Men throughout the worlds of the ten directions,
In the past, in the present, and also in the future,
With body, mouth, and mind entirely pure,
I bow before them all, omitting none.

With the awesome spiritual power of Universal Worthy's vows,
I appear at the same time before every Thus Come One,
And in transformed bodies as numerous as motes of dust in all lands,
Bow to Buddhas as numerous as motes of dust in all lands.

In every mote of dust there are Buddhas as numerous as motes of dust,
Each dwelling amid a host of Bodhisattvas.
Throughout all the motes of dust in endless Dharma Realms, it is the same:
I deeply believe they all are filled with Buddhas.

The Second Vow: To praise the Thus Come Ones.

With oceans of myriad sounds, I let fall everywhere
Words and phrases, wonderful and endless,
Which now and through all the aeons of the future,
Praise the wide, deep sea of the Buddhas' merit and virtue.

The Third Vow: To make abundant offerings.

Flower garlands supreme and wonderful
Music, perfumes, parasols, and canopies,
And other decorations rich and rare,
I offer up to every Thus Come One.

Fine clothing, superior incense,
Powdered and burning incense, lamps and candles,
Each one heaped as high as mount Sumeru,
I offer fully to all Tathagatas.

With a vast, great, supremely liberated mind,
I believe in all Buddhas of the three periods of time;
With the strength of Universal Worthy's conduct and vows,
I make offerings to all Thus Come Ones everywhere.

The Fourth Vow: To repent of and overcome karmic obstacles.

For all the evil deeds I have committed in the past,
Created by my body, mouth, and mind,
From beginningless greed, anger, and delusion,
I now know shame and repent them all.

The Fifth Vow: To rejoice in all merits and virtues.

I rejoice in the merits and virtues
Of all beings in the ten directions,
The learners and the thoroughly learned ones in the Two Vehicles,
And all Thus Come Ones and Bodhisattvas.

The Sixth Vow: To request the turning of the Dharma wheel.

Before the Lamps of the Worlds of the ten directions,
To those who first accomplished Bodhi,
I now request and beseech them all
To turn the foremost, wondrous Dharma wheel.

The Seventh Vow: To request that the Buddhas remain in the world.

If there are Buddhas who wish for nirvana, I request with deep sincerity
That they dwell in the world for a long time
To bring benefits and bliss to every being.

I pay homage to them with blessings, praise them and make offerings;
I request that the Buddhas remain in the world and turn the Dharma wheel.
The good roots gained from following them and rejoicing in their merit and
virtue
And from repentance and reform,
I transfer to living beings and the Buddha Way.

The Eighth Vow: To study always with the Buddhas.

I study with the Buddhas and practice
The perfect conduct of Universal Worthy;
I make offerings to all the Thus Come Ones of the past
And to all present Buddhas in all the ten directions.

All future Teachers of Gods and Men
Whose aspirations and vows have been completed
I will follow in study throughout the three periods of time
And quickly attain Great Bodhi.

In all lands in all of the ten directions,
Vast, great, pure, and wonderfully adorned,
All Thus Come Ones sit beneath regal Bodhi trees
While assemblies circumambulate them.

I vow that every being in all directions
Will be peaceful, joyful, and without worry.
May they obtain the proper Dharma's profound benefits,
And may all their afflictions be wiped away, without exception.

While striving to attain Bodhi,
I will gain the knowledge of past lives in all destinies.
I will always leave the home-life and cultivate pure precepts,
Without outflows, never broken, and without stain.

Be they gods, nagas, yakshas, or kumbhandas,
Humans, non-humans, or any of the rest,
In the many languages of all such living beings,
With every sound I will speak the Dharma.

I will cultivate the pure paramitas with vigor,
And never abandon the Bodhi Mind.
I will banish all obstructions and defilements
And fulfill all wondrous practices.

From all delusions, karma, and demon-states
Amid all worldly paths, I will be freed,
As the lotus does not touch the water,
As the sun and moon do not stop in space.

The Ninth Vow: To be in harmony with living beings always.

Ending the sufferings of the paths of evil,
And to everyone equally bringing joy,
May I for aeons as numerous as the motes of dust in all lands
Ever benefit all in the ten directions.

Always in harmony with living beings,
Cultivating through all future aeons
The vast conduct of Universal Worthy,
I will perfect the unsurpassed Great Bodhi.

May all who cultivate with me
Assemble with me in one place,
With identical karmas of body, mouth, and mind
As we cultivate and study all practices and vows.

With all advisors good and wise who aid me
Explaining Universal Worthy's deeds,

I vow always to congregate together:
May they never be displeased with me.

I vow always to meet Thus Come Ones face to face,
And the hosts of disciples who gather around them.
I will raise offerings which are vast and great,
Untiring to the end of future eons.

I will hold high the subtly wondrous Buddha Dharma
And will illuminate all the practices of Bodhi;
I will be ultimately pure in Universal Worthy's way,
Practicing until the end of time.

Inexhaustible blessings and wisdom
I cultivate throughout all worlds;
By concentration, wisdom, skillful means, and liberation,
I will gain an endless store of merits and virtues.

In one mote of dust there are lands as numerous as motes of dust;
In each land are incalculable numbers of Buddhas.
In every place where Buddhas dwell I see the host assembled,
Endlessly proclaiming all the practices of Bodhi.

In all the ten directions everywhere, throughout the sea of lands,
Every hair-tip encompasses oceans of past, present and future.
So, too, there is a sea of Buddhas, a sea of Buddha lands;
Pervading them all, I cultivate for oceans of endless time.

The speech of all Thus Come Ones is pure;
Each word contains an ocean of sounds.
In accordance with what beings like to hear,
The Buddhas' sea of eloquence flows forth.

All Thus Come Ones throughout the three periods of time
Forever turn the wonderful Dharma wheel;
With these inexhaustible seas of words and languages,
I understand all with my deep wisdom.

I can penetrate the future
And exhaust all aeons in a single thought;

In a single thought I completely enter
All aeons throughout the three periods of time.

In one thought I see all Lions of Men
Of the past, present, and future;
I constantly fathom the Buddhas' states,
Their magical liberations and their awesome strength.

On the tip of an extremely fine hair
Appear jeweled lands of past, present and future:
Lands on hair-tips as numerous as dust motes
in all lands of the ten directions,
I deeply enter, adorn, and purify.

All Lamps of the Future that light the world
Complete the Way, turn the Dharma wheel, and rescue living beings.
As they perfect the Buddhas' work and manifest nirvana,
I draw near to and attend each one, and obtain

The spiritual power to go everywhere swiftly;
The power to enter the Mahayana universally through the Universal Door;
The power of wisdom and conduct to cultivate merits and virtues
universally;
The subtle spiritual power to shield all with Great Compassion;

The power to purify and adorn all with supreme blessings everywhere;
The power of wisdom which is unattached and independent;
The awesome spiritual powers and the powers of concentration, wisdom,
and skill-in-means;
The power of universally accumulating Bodhi;

The power of good karma which purifies all things;
The power to eradicate all afflictions;
The power to subdue all demons;
The power to perfect Universal Worthy's conduct.

I everywhere adorn and purify a sea of lands,
And I liberate all living beings, without exception.
With great skill I make selections from among the sea of Dharmas
And enter deeply into the wisdom sea.

I cultivate the ocean of practices for attaining purity;
I perfect and complete a sea of vows.
I draw near to a sea of Buddhas and make offerings,
And cultivate without fatigue for a sea of time.

To all Thus Come Ones throughout the three periods of time,
With Bodhi, conduct, and vows most supreme,
I fully offer up my perfect cultivation;
With Universal Worthy's practices, I awaken to Bodhi.

Each Thus Come One has an elder disciple
Named Universal Worthy, the Honored One.
I now transfer all good roots, and I vow
To perform deeds of wisdom identical to his.

I vow that my body, mouth, and mind will be forever pure
And that all practices and lands will be also.
I vow in every way to be identical
To the wisdom of Universal Worthy.

I will wholly purify Universal Worthy's conduct,
And the great vows of Manjushri as well.
I will fulfill all their deeds, leaving nothing undone.
Until the future ends, I will never tire.

My cultivation is infinite and immeasurable;
I obtain boundless merit and virtue.
I will dwell in peace amid limitless practices,
And will penetrate the strength of spiritual powers.

The Tenth Vow: To transfer all merit and virtue.

Manjushri has wisdom, courage and bravery;
Universal Worthy's conduct and wisdom are the same.
I now transfer all good roots
In order to follow them in practice and in study.

Throughout the three periods of time, all Buddhas praise
Such vows as these, lofty and great.

I now transfer all good roots, wishing to perfect
Universal Worthy's supreme practices.

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha
And will be born in his Land of Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

Reborn in the Western Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill,
Without exception, these Great Vows,
To the delight and benefit all beings.

The Assembly of Amitabha Buddha is completely pure;
When from a matchless lotus I am born,
I will behold the Thus Come One's Immeasurable Light as he appears before
me
To bestow a prediction of Bodhi.

Receiving a prediction from the Thus Come One,
I will manifest countless appearances and forms,
And with wisdom power vast and great, pervade ten directions
To benefit all the realms of living beings.

Realms of worlds in empty space may come to an end,
And living beings, karma and afflictions may be extinguished;
But they will never be exhausted,
And neither will my vows.

With myriad jewels in boundless lands in all directions,
I make decorations and offerings to the Thus Come Ones.
For aeons as numerous as the motes of dust in all lands, I bring
The foremost peace and joy to gods and humans.

Yet, if anyone believes in these Great Vows,
As they pass by the ear but a single time,
And in search of Bodhi thirstily craves these vows,
The merits and virtues thus gained will surpass these offerings.

With bad advisors forever left behind,

From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Infinite Light
And to perfect Universal Worthy's Supreme Vows.

Easily obtaining the blessings of long life,
Assured of a noble rebirth in the human realm,
Before long he will perfect and complete
Universal Worthy's practices.

In the past, owing to a lack of wisdom power,
The five offenses of extreme evil he has committed;
In one thought, they can all be wiped away by reciting
Universal Worthy's Great Vows.

His clan, race, and color, marks and characteristics
With his wisdom are all perfected and complete;
Demons and externalists will have no way to harm him,
And he will be a field of merits in the Three Realms.

To the regal Bodhi tree he will quickly go,
And, seated there, subdue hordes of demons.
Supremely and perfectly enlightened, he will turn the Dharma wheel
To benefit the host of living beings.

If anyone can read, recite, receive, and hold high
Universal Worthy's Vows and proclaim them,
His reward only the Buddhas will know,
And he will obtain Bodhi's highest path.

If anyone recites Universal Worthy's Vows,
I will speak of a portion of his good roots:
In one single thought he can fulfill
The pure vows of sentient beings.

The supreme and endless blessings from Universal Worthy's conduct
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Land of Infinite Light!

Part Four Conclusion

http://www.amitabha.com/sutras/flower_adornment/part_4/flower_4.htm

At that time, when the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy Mahasattva had finished speaking these pure verses on his Great Vows before the Thus Come One, the youth Sudhana was overwhelmed with boundless joy. All the Bodhisattvas were extremely joyful as well, and the Thus Come One applauded, saying, "Excellent indeed, excellent indeed!"

At that time, the World Honored One proclaimed this Supreme Dharma Door of the Inconceivable State of Liberation for all the sages and Bodhisattvas, with Manjushri Bodhisattva as their leader.

Also present were all the great Bodhisattvas and the six thousand Bhikshus who had matured, with Maitreya Bodhisattva as their leader. All the great Bodhisattvas of the worthy kalpa, led by the Immaculate Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, were present also.

All the great Bodhisattvas who in one lifetime would be the next Buddhas and who were at the position of the anointment of the crown gathered together with all the assemblies of Bodhisattva Mahasattvas, as numerous as fine dust-motes in an ocean of lands, who came from the remaining worlds of all the ten directions. They were headed by the great, wise Shariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, and others. All the great sound-hearers, along with all the people, gods, and lords of all worlds, as well as dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahogaras, humans, non-humans, and so on, and the entire great assembly, upon hearing what the Buddha had said, were all exceedingly joyful, and faithfully accepted it, and put it into practice.

Note on the Avatamsaka Sutra

Known in Japanese as Kegon, in Chinese as Hui-Yan, the Avatamsaka Sutra is referred to in English as the Flower Ornament or Flower Garland Sutra.

<http://online.sfsu.edu/%7Erone/Buddhism/BuddhistDict/BDF.html>

The Flower Adornment Sutra is the sutra of the Dharma-realm and the sutra of empty space. To the exhaustion of the Dharma-realm and empty space there is no place where the Flower Adornment Sutra is not present. Wherever the Flower

Adornment Sutra is found, the Buddha is to be found, and also the Dharma and the Sangha of Worthy sages. That is why when the Buddha realized proper enlightenment, he wished to speak the Great Flower Adornment Sutra, to teach and transform the great masters of the Dharma-body. Since this sutra was a sutra of inconceivable wonder, it was then concealed within the dragon's palace for the dragon king to protect. Afterwards Nagarjuna ('dragon-tree') Bodhisattva went to the dragon's palace, memorized it, and brought it back.

The Flower Adornment Sutra is like an auspicious cloud in empty space, which extends throughout the Three Thousand Great Thousand World-System, raining down the sweet dew of Dharma rain to moisten all living beings. The Flower Adornment Sutra is also like the sun, which everywhere illumines the Three Thousand World-Realm, bringing warmth to every single living being. The Flower Adornment Sutra is also like the great earth, which can produce and grow the myriad existing things. Therefore, it can be said that any period in which the Flower Adornment Sutra exists is a period in which the proper Dharma long remains.

From the beginning to the end of the Flower Adornment Sutra, every phrase of the Sutra is an unsurpassed Dharma jewel. If we are able actually to apply the principles and cultivate according to the principles of the Sutra, then we are certain to become Buddhas. For that reason the Flower Adornment Sutra can be called the mother of all Buddhas. The Flower Adornment Sutra is the Dharma-body of all Buddhas. The Buddha praised the Vajra Sutra saying:

In any place where the Sutra text is found, there is the Buddha.

Wherever the Flower Adornment Sutra is, there is the Buddha. The Buddha is right there. It is just that your karmic obstacles are so deep and heavy, so although you are face to face, you do not see the Buddha. . . .



THE KING OF PRAYERS

Kopan Monastery Prayers and Practices

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THE PRAYER OF WAYS HIGH AND SUBLIME

(Skt: Arya bhadra charya prani dana raja)

(Tib: phag pa bzang po spyod pai smon lan gyi rgyal po)

O lions amongst men
Buddhas, past, present and future
To as many of your as exist in the ten directions
I bow with my body, speech and mind.

On waves of strength of this king
Of prayers for exalted, sublime ways
With bodies numerous as atoms of the world
I bow to the Buddhas pervading space

On every atom is found a Buddha
Sitting amidst countless Buddha sons
I look with eyes of faith to the Victorious ones
Thus filling the entire Dharmadatu.

Of these with endless oceans of excellences
Endowed with an ocean of wondrous speech
I sing praises of the greatness of all Buddhas
An eulogy to those gone to bliss.

Garlands of flowers I offer them
And beautiful sounds, supreme perfumes
Butter lamps and sacred incense
I offer to all victorious ones.

Excellent food, supreme fragrances
And a mound of mystic substances high as Mt Meru
I arrange in special formation
And offer to those who have conquered themselves.

And all peerless offerings I hold up
In admiration of those gone to bliss
With strength of faith in sublime ways
I prostrate and make offerings to the conquerors.

Long overpowered by attachment, aversion and ignorance
Countless evils I have committed
With acts of body speech and mind
Each and every one of there I now confess.

In the perfections of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas
The Arhats training and beyond
And in the latent goodness of every living being
I lift up my heart and rejoice.

O lights unto the ten directions
Buddhas who have found the passionless stage of Enlightenment
To all of you I direct this request
Turn the incomparable wheel of Dharma.

O Masters wishing to show parinirvana
Stay with us and teach, I pray.
For as many aeons as there are specks of dust
In order to bring goodness and joy to beings.

May any small merits that may have amassed
By thus prostrating, making offerings, confessing, rejoicing
And asking the Buddhas to remain and teach the Dharma
Be dedicated now to supreme and perfect Enlightenment.

May my offerings be received by all passed Buddhas
And by all those now abiding in the ten directions
And may all the Buddhas who have not yet come
Quickly perfect their minds and reach Buddhahood, the state of full
awakening.

May all the Buddha realms of the ten directions
Remain forever vast and completely pure
May the world be completely filled with Buddhas
Who have attained illumination under sacred trees
And may they all be surrounded by Bodhisattvas.

May all living beings of the ten directions
Always abide in health and joy
May they live in accord with the ways of Dharma
And may their every wish become fulfilled.

By my living in the ways of Enlightenment
May I remember my past lives in all my reincarnations
And in all cycles of death, migration and rebirth
May a sensitivity for truth be ever strong within me.

By my following in the footsteps of the Buddhas
May I utterly perfect the sublime ways of the Bodhisattvas
And may I practice the faultless un-degenerating
stainless and pure ways of self control

May I master all languages that exist,
including those of the gods, nagas, yakshas, spirits and the varieties of men
As well as all forms of communication of living beings
That I may be able to show Dharma in every way.

Striving thus and in the transcending perfections
May I never forget the Bodhi mind

And may I totally cleanse from within my mind stream
All negativities and mental veils.

May I gain freedom from karma, delusion and karmic maras
To be able to live in the world unaffected by its stains
like a stainless lotus grows out he mud
And like the sun and moon shine without obstruction in the sky.

For long as there are Buddha fields and directions
May I strive to quell the misery of the lower realms,
May I place the living beings only in happiness
And bring them all only benefits and joy.

May I strive to complete the ways of Enlightenment
And to abide in ways harmonious with the world
May I expose others to the ways most sublime
And myself abide in them throughout all future aeons.

May my ways and the ways of a Bodhisattva
Always go together hand in hand
In body, speech and also in mind
May I attune to their sublime ways.

May I never be separated from the good friends
Who reveal the path of sublime ways
And who wish only to benefit me
May I never disappoint them even for a moment.

May I constantly envision the perfect Buddhas
The protectors who are surrounded by Bodhisattvas
And in the future may I never weary
Of devoting myself to them with all my strength.

May I forever uphold the holy Dharma of the Buddhas
And illuminate the sublime ways of enlightenment
May I practice throughout all future ages
The ways and deeds of the sublime path.

Circling in the various realms of existence
May I amass inexhaustible goodness and wisdom

And may I become an unending treasure of qualities
Such as methods, wisdom, samadhi and the experiences of the bodhisattva.

On every atom are Buddha fields numberless as atoms
Each field is filled with Buddhas beyond conception
And each Buddha is surrounded by a myriad Bodhisattvas
To all these dwellers in sublime ways I turn my attention.

Thus all atoms within the directions
Abide within a space of a single hair
An ocean of Buddhas in an ocean of Buddha fields
Performing enlightened activities for an ocean of aeons

Each Buddha with his perfected speech releases
An ocean of sounds with every word he says
To satisfy the infinitely diverse tendencies of beings
Thus does the speech of a Buddha constantly flow.

All these conquerors past, present and future
Continually turn the method of Dharma wheels
With all the powers of my mind I listen
For the inexhaustible sound of their works.

All future aeons that could possible be
Manifest within me in a single instant
And I myself in a fraction of a moment
Enter into all aeons of the three times.

All past, present and future lions amongst men
I envision with the instantaneous wisdom
And by the power of the Bodhisattvas examples
I focus upon the objects of their experience.

I manifest Buddha fields past, present and future
Upon a single atom of existence
And then I transform every single atom
Of existence into Buddha field.

By this, when the future lights of the worlds
Eventually gain Bodhi, turn the Dharma wheels

And reveal the passing to nirvanas supreme peace
May I take rebirth in their very presence.

Then may I attain the ten powers:
The power of instant magical emanations
The power which is a vehicle with every door
The power of excellent activity
The power of all pervading love
The power of constantly positive energy
The power of passionless wisdom
The powers of knowledge method and samadhi
And the power of enlightenment itself.

May I purify the powers of karma
May I crush the powers of delusion
May I render powerless the powerful maras
And may I perfect the power of sublime ways.

May I purify an ocean of realms
May I liberate an ocean of sentient beings
May I see an ocean of truths and
May I realize an ocean of wisdom.

May I perform an ocean of perfect deeds
May I perfect an ocean of prayers
May I revere an ocean of Buddhas, and
May I practice untiringly for an ocean of aeons.

Through my practice of the sublime Bodhisattva ways
May I gain the enlightenment of Buddhahood
And then fulfil the enlightened and sublime aspirations
Of the Buddhas past present and future.

In order to match the ways of the sage
Called Samantabhadra, the always sublime one
Chief amongst the awakened one's sons
I now dedicate all virtues that I possess.

Just as the sublime sage Samantabhadra
Dedicated all pure practice of body speech and mind

To the attainment of a pure state and pure realms
So do I now dedicate the fruit of all my efforts.

In order to engage in all sublime virtues
I offer the prayer of Manjushri
In the future may I never become faint
In striving to perfect the exalted Bodhisattva ways.

May my deeds never reach a limit
May my qualities of excellence become boundless
And, by abiding in immeasurable activity,
May I find Buddhahood, the state of limitless manifestation.

Limitless is the extent of space
Limitless is the number of sentient beings
And limitless are the karma and delusion of beings
Such are the limits of my aspirations.

One may offer supreme ornaments of the Buddha fields
Of the ten directions to the conquerors
And also offer the highest joys of men and gods
For aeons numerous as atoms of the world

But to read or hear The Kind of Prayers
With eyes looking to supreme illumination
And faith stirring in ones heart for even an instant
Gives birth to a far more superior merit.

Should anyone recite this aspiration of sublime ways
They will pass beyond all states of sorrow
Will rise above all inferior beings and gain
A vision of Amitabha, Buddha of Boundless Light.

Given in this very lifetime
All sublime joys will be theirs
The experiences of the always sublime Samantabhadra
Without obstruction will quickly be theirs.

Merely by giving voice to these aspirations
Of the sublime ways of a Bodhisattva

All evils, such as the five inexplicable deeds that out of ignorance were done
Will be completely and utterly washed away.

One will gain the wisdom form signs
Marks, family and complexion of a supreme Nirmanakaya
The most revered goal of all three worlds
And thus transcend the harms of devils and fools.

One will travel to the great tree of illumination
And there, for the sake of living beings will make ones seat,
Then one will turn the mighty wheel of Dharma
And tame evil Mara and his forces.

Should anyone touch, read or teach to others
This prayer of the sublime way of a Bodhisattva
The effects can be known only by an omniscient Buddha
Therefore, doubt not that it leads to enlightenment.

In order to follow the excellent examples set
By the wisdom of the Bodhisattva Manjushri
And the always sublime
All virtue I dedicate to their peerless ideals.

All conquerors passed into the three times
Have praised as supreme this peerless dedication
Therefore I also surrender all roots of my activities
To the sublime goals of a Bodhisattva.

When the moment of my death arrives
May I remain free from spiritual obscurations
May I perceive the countenance of Amitabha
And transmigrate to sukavati, the pure land of joy.

Having arrived there, may I fulfil
All aims of this prayer of aspirations
And benefit the countless living beings
Residing throughout the ten directions.

In the joyous mandala of Amitabha Buddha
May I be reborn from a beautiful lotus

And may I there have the pleasure of gaining
A pure prophecy from Amitabha himself.

Having won his words of prophesy
By the power of mind may I fill all directions
With many millions of mystical emanations
And bring limitless benefits to the world.

If by reciting this prayer of sublime ways
I have amassed a tiny fragment of goodness]
May it work immediately to fulfil
All dharmic hopes of the living beings...

*Thus is complete The Great King of Prayers,
The Prayer of Ways High and Sublime.*

* * *

Editor's Note:

Avalokiteshvara (Kwan Yin) is known as the bodhisattva of compassion. The ideal of all the bodhisattvas, however, is compassion (literally, *feeling with*). The bodhisattvas feel with us and stay with us. They teach us that Buddhist *practice* is not just what takes place on the meditation cushion but also in the world—in schools and in hospitals, in families and in workplaces, wherever people can benefit from the compassionate practice of the bodhisattvas. Lay Buddhists can follow the way of the bodhisattvas, a practical Buddhism without necessarily renouncing the world to follow the monastic life. This prayer, echoing the vows of Samantabhadra, gives us a way to make the bodhisattvas' great work our own.



SAMANTABHADRA CONTEMPLATION SUTRA

<http://www.purifymind.com/Samantabhadra.htm>

Thus I have heard: Once the Buddha was staying at Vaisali, in the multi-storied assembly hall in the Great Forest Monastery. Then he told all the Bhikshus, saying, "After three months, I shall surely enter Parinirvana."

Thereupon the Venerable Ananda rose from his seat, straightened his garment, and with joined palms and folded hands, circumambulated the Buddha three times and bowed to him, then knelt down with palms together. He attentively gazed at the Tathagata without turning away his eyes for a moment.

The Elder Mahakasyapa and the Bodhisattva, Mahasattva, Maitreya also rose from their seats, and with palms together bowed to him and gazed up at his honored countenance.

Then the three great leaders spoke in unison to the Buddha, saying: "World Honored One! After the Nirvana of the Tathagata, how can living beings bring forth the resolve of the Bodhisattva, practice the Expansive Sutras, the Great Vehicle, and ponder the world of Uniform Reality with right thought? How can they keep from losing their resolve for the Supreme Bodhi? How, without cutting off their earthly cares and renouncing their Five Desires, can they also purify their sense organs and destroy their offenses?"

How, with the natural pure eyes received at birth from their parents and without leaving the world of the Five Desires, can they see all impediments, just as they are?"

The Buddha said to Ananda: "Listen to me attentively! Listen to me attentively! Consider what I am about to say, and remember it well! In the past on Vulture Peak and in other places, the Tathagata has already thoroughly explained the Way of Uniform Reality.

But now in this place, for all living beings and others in the worlds to come who desire to cultivate the supreme Dharma of the Great Vehicle, and to those who desire to learn the Practices of Universal Worthy and to cultivate the Practices of Universal Worthy, I will now speak this Dharma of contemplation.

For all those who get to see Universal Worthy, as well as for those who do not see him, I will now explain for you in detail how to eliminate numerous offenses.

"Ananda! The Bodhisattva Universal Worthy was born in the Eastern Land of Pure Wonder. I have already described the features of his country in detail in the Dharma Flower Sutra. Now I will briefly explain them again.

"Ananda! If there be Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, Gods, Dragons and the Eight-fold Pantheon, or any living beings who recite Great Vehicle Sutras, if there are those who cultivate the Great Vehicle, aspire to it, delight to see the form and body of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, find pleasure in seeing the stupa of the Buddha Abundant Treasures, take joy in seeing Sakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas who emanate from him, and rejoice to obtain the purity of the six sense organs, then they must learn this contemplation.

The merits of this contemplation will make them free from all hindrances and allow them to see the Buddhas' fine and sublime form. Even though they have not yet entered into samadhi, just because they recite and keep the Great Vehicle they will devote themselves to practicing it, and after having kept their minds continuously on the Great Vehicle for one day, or for three times seven days, they will be able to see Universal Worthy.

Those who have heavy obstacles will see him after seven times seven days; again, those who have heavier obstacles will see him after one rebirth. Again, those who have much heavier obstacles will see him after two rebirths; further, those who have still heavier obstacles will see him after three rebirths. Thus the retribution of their karma differs; it is not equal. Thus I speak the teaching expediently."

"The Bodhisattva Universal Worthy is boundless in the size of his body, boundless in the sound of his voice, and boundless in the form of his image. Desiring to come to this world, he makes use of his sovereign psychic powers and compresses his stature to a smaller size. Because the people in Jambudvīpa have the Three Weighty Obstacles, by the power of his wisdom he appears by transformation as mounted on a white elephant. The elephant has six tusks, and seven limbs, (supports its body on the ground?). Under its seven limbs, seven lotus flowers grow.

The elephant is white as snow, the most brilliant of all shades of white, so pure that even crystal and the Himalaya Mountains cannot compare with it. The body of the elephant is four hundred and fifty yojanas in length and four hundred yojanas in height. At the tip of the six tusks rest six bathing pools. In each bathing pool grow fourteen lotus flowers as large as the pools. The flowers bloom majestically, like the king of celestial trees.

On each of these flowers sits a jade maiden whose countenance is red as crimson and whose radiance surpasses that of a goddess. In the hand of that maiden five harps appear by transformation, each of them with five hundred musical instruments as its accompaniment.

Five hundred birds fly up, including ducks, wild geese, and mandarin ducks, in color like precious gems, and settle among flowers and branches.

On the elephant's trunk there is a flower with a stalk the color of a red pearl. Its blossom is golden, its shape is still a bud that has not yet blossomed.

After witnessing this event, if a person further repents of his offenses, and contemplates the Great Vehicle attentively, with entire devotion, and ponders it in his mind without cease, he will be able to see the flower spontaneously bloom, and radiate with a golden color. The blossom of the lotus flower is made of kimsuka gems enlaid with wonderful, pure Mani jewels; the stamens are made of diamond.

A transformation Buddha appears, sitting on the petals of the lotus flower with a host of Bodhisattvas sitting on the stamens. From the eyebrows of the transformation Buddha a ray of light appears and enters the elephant's trunk.

This ray, the color of a red lotus flower, emanates from the elephant's trunk and enters its eyes; the ray then shines from the elephant's eyes and enters its ears; it then comes from the elephant's ears, illuminates its head, and changes into a golden platform.

On the elephant's head there are three transformed attendants: one holds a golden wheel, another a jewel, and another a vajra pestle. When the attendant raises the pestle and points it at the elephant, the latter immediately walks (a few steps?).

The elephant does not tread on the ground but hovers in the air, seven feet above the earth, yet the elephant leaves its footprints on the ground. The footprints are altogether perfect, marking the wheel's hub with a thousand spokes. From each hallmark of the wheel's hub grows a great lotus flower, upon which an elephant appears by transformation.

This elephant also has seven legs and walks after the great elephant. Every time the transformed elephant raises and brings down its legs, seven thousand elephants appear, all following the great elephant as its retinue.

On the elephant's trunk, in hue like a red lotus flower, sits a transformed Buddha who emits a ray from his eyebrows.

This ray of light, in similar fashion, enters the elephant's trunk.

The ray emerges from the elephant's trunk and enters its eyes; the ray then shines from the elephant's eyes and again enters its ears; it then comes from the elephant's ears and reaches its head.

Gradually rising to the elephant's back, the ray is transformed into a golden saddle which is adorned with the Seven Precious Gems.

On the four sides of the saddle are the pillars made of the Seven Precious Gems, which are decorated with precious objects, forming a jeweled pedestal. On this pedestal there is a lotus flower stamen bearing the Seven Precious Gems, and that stamen is also composed of a hundred jewels. The blossom of that lotus flower is made of a great Mani-jewel.



WHY AN ELEPHANT?

Perhaps these verses from the Dhammapada may enhance the image of Samantabhadra mounted on an elephant.

320. Silently shall I endure abuse as the elephant in battle endures the arrow sent from the bow: for the world is ill-natured.

321. They lead a tamed elephant to battle, the king mounts a tamed elephant; the tamed is the best among men, he who silently endures abuse.

322. Mules are good, if tamed, and noble Sindhu horses, and elephants with large tusks; but he who tames himself is better still.

323. For with these animals does no man reach the untrodden country (Nirvana), where a tamed man goes on a tamed animal, on his own well-tamed self.

326. This mind of mine went formerly wandering about as it liked, as it listed, as it pleased; but I shall now hold it in thoroughly, as the rider who holds the hook holds in the furious elephant.

The six tusks represent the six paramitas, which Samantabhadra has mastered: generosity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. They may also represent the six senses, which Samantabhadra has overcome.

The long-lived elephant may also be linked to Samantabhadra's role as the bodhisattva of long life.



MANTRAS

ॐ मय व श्रं ॥

Sanscrit: Om samayas tvam
You are an emblem (of the pledge).

おん さんまや したばん

Japanese mantra

Namo ta hung Pu Hsien P'usa.

Chinese mantra



Root syllable *an*

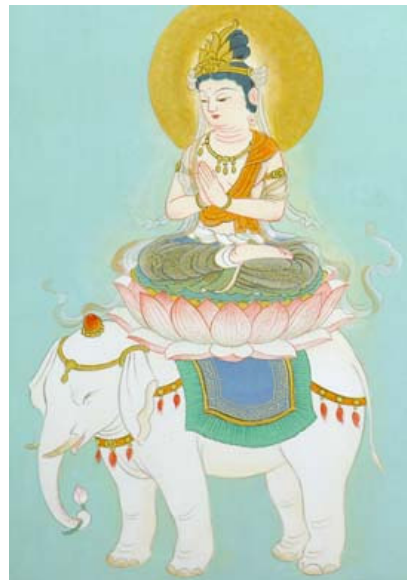
Dhāraṇī of Samantabhadra

Tadyathā/ oṃnamonama stri/ bhuvaneśvare/
mahābhogāya/ asamasama/ amītasama/
anantasama/ gaganasama/ tribhuvanasama/
aśeṣasama/ veṣasama/ parama-arthasama/
svabhāvasama/ tathāgatasama/ arajāḥsama/
śuddhisama/ buddhisama/ dharmatathātasama/
abhiṣamasama/ samasama/ ekānāya/ sāgara/
viśuddhe/ āloka/ hīhī/ labdhalabdha/ vijayavijaya/
amprasagara/ nayanaya/ hinira-adhiṣṭhāna/
sambhoga oṃanalayalaya/ dharma-agra/
dharadhara/ jayajaya/ hūṃhūṃ/ dhamadhamasvāhā/

CHANGING IMAGES OF SAMANTABHADRA BODHISATTVA

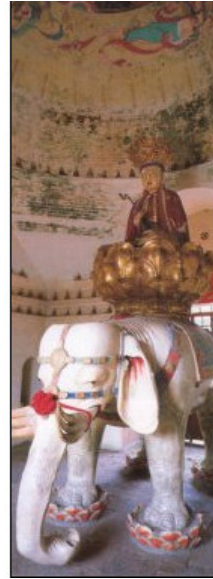


Just as Avalokiteshvara, as he moves to China, changes into the female Quan Yin, so does Samantabhadra change to the female Pusien. In Japan, as Fugen, Samantabhadra appears in both male and female forms. In fact, the bodhisattvas transcend clear sexual identity.



Samantabhadra is represented in many different materials:





MOUNT EMEI

Articles about Samantabhadra's home

www.buddhistdoor.com/bdoor/0108/sources/fourmtn2.htm

Mount Emei belongs to the Qionglai Mountains in southwestern Sichuan Basin and is located in the Emei County of Sichuan Province. It consists of four major mountains -- Da'e (#1), Er'e (#2), San'e (#3) and Si'e (#4). Mount Emei mainly refers to the Da'e Mountain.

From a distance, the Da'e and Er'e mountains look like a moth's pair of brows (antennas) that extend long, slender and curved in a picturesque fashion, the so-called "broad forehead, delicate eyebrows" (a popular saying in ancient China of describing a beautiful woman) hence the name of the mountain Emei which literally means "moth's brows", or "delicate eyebrows", just as the classic "Commentary on the Waterways" puts it, "On a fine autumn day, the two mountains stand opposite each other like a moth's brows".

Mount Emei, with its soaring ridge upon soaring ridge in a topographical turmoil, are so remarkable in outline, grand in dimension, yet so ethereally enchanting, as to vindicate the popular saying, "No place under heaven is as beautiful as Mount Emei." The Wanfoding, the main peak of Mount Emei, is 3099 meters above sea level. Another peak, the Jinding Mountain (Golden Top), is 3077 meters. Mount Emei is nearly 1000 meters taller than Mount Huashan, the tallest of the Five Holy Mountains of China. That is why

Mount Emei is also extolled as being "higher than the Five Holy Mountains, and most picturesque in China" Stone-paved footpaths spiral their way from the foot to the peak for more than 50 kilometers before disappearing into the sea of cloud. Monkeys and precious birds, rich tapestry of exotic flowers and plants are found everywhere in the dense forests of ancient pines and cypresses, visited by swarms of butterflies and the resonant croaking of frogs. The daytime halo over the Jinding Mountain and the spectacles of night lamps add beauty to the landscape and earn the mountain the name "Mountain of Brightness".

Buddhism found its way to Mount Emei during the 265~290 era of the Emperor Wudi in the Western Jin Dynasty. By the times of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, more and more temples were built there. It is claimed that Samantabhadra, the Universal Worthy Great Conduct Bodhisattva converted the mountain to his domain, where he spread the holy words of the Buddha. A bronze statue of Samantabhadra was erected at the Wannian Temple there during the Song Dynasty, which helped establish Mount Emei as the bodhimandala of Samantabhadra. Buddhism reached its zenith at Mount Emei during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, when more than 70 temples were built and the monks population reached several thousands. Among them, about 20 temples survived, including the Baoguo, Fuhu, Wannian, Qingyin, Xiangfeng and Huazang temples, the Feilaidian Hall, the Hongchunping Terrace and the Xixiangchi Pool. The famed "10 Major Sights of Emei" are: the Auspicious Sunlight atop the Golden Top (Jinding), the Rich Verdure of the Lingyan Mountain, the Evening Bell Tolling at Shengji, the Twin Bridges with a Rich Susurru, the Rain on Hongchun at Dawn, the Celestial Mansions of 9 Elders, the Moonlit Night at the Xixiangchi Pool, the Autumn Wind over Baishui, the Snowfall at the Great Terrace, and the Clouds over the Luofeng Peak. The 1000-li (Chinese mile, equivalent to 40 km) stone path winds its way in the mountains very much like a glittering silver chain hanging down from the top of Mount Emei.

Samantabhadra is one of the 4 major Bodhisattvas in Buddhism. According to the Avatamsaka Sutra (the Garland Sutra, meaning Flower Adornment Sutra), Samantabhadra expressed the cherished wish to disseminate the doctrines of the Buddha and was nicknamed "Samantabhadra the Tireless Traveller". He stood in attendance at Sakyamuni's (i.e. the Buddha's) right side and was in charge of benevolence, while Manjusri stood to the Buddha's left as the Bodhisattva in charge of wisdom. Since Samantabhadra was in the habit of reading and observing nature on the road, he needed a mount that could walk as smoothly as possible. That is why he was fond of riding his white elephant with 6 tusks.

So in the Buddhist art, he is often shown as holding a double curved sceptre in his hand and sitting on a lotus seat fastened to the back of his elephant.

That Mount Emei had become his bodhimandala had something to do with the natural light on the top of the mountain. It was said that when Pu Gong, a hermit of the Eastern Han Dynasty spotted the spectacular rays on the mountaintop, he consulted an Indian monk who had just arrived in China, who said, "This is the auspicious symbol of Samantabhadra. This light was originally used to protect Tathagata, but now it has made its presence felt in this place for the benefit of the multitude." Such explanation was in accordance with the description of Samantabhadra's residence in the Garland Sutra, which says, " There is a Mountain of Brightness in the Southwest, where quite a few Bodhisattvas have resided since ancient times. The current Bodhisattva living there is Samantabhadra together with 3,000 family members. He often preaches the doctrines there." As the Garland Sutra was spread into China during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Buddhists at that time began to worship Mount Emei as Samantabhadra's residence and bodhimandala. This tradition was handed down till this day.

Mount Emei is known throughout the world for its consummate architecture and vast collection of cultural treasures. For example, the Baoguo Temple is an outstanding wood structure. Its buildings, with immense proportions and set off elegantly by kiosks and pavilions, are tucked away in what looks like a Buddhist world, where birds are singing happily amidst the mountain flowers and foliage. The Hall of Seven Buddhas stand tall and magnificent, with both its interior and exterior ornamented with elaborately wrought wood and stone carvings. The marble balustrades look conspicuous for their figurines carvings. The seven Buddhist statues in the hall are more than 5 meters tall, with the Buddhas depicted as sitting stately on lotus pedestals, eyes half closed, facial expressions solemn, images extremely lifelike. All the structures on the premises are exquisitely decorated.

The woodcarvings of figurines, flowers and birds in Tripitaka Pavilion are regarded as superb works of art. The Baoguo Temple is full of cultural artifacts. The display room in the Mahavira Hall features works of such celebrated Chinese calligraphers and painters as Zhao Mengfu, Xu Beihong, Qi Baishi and Zhang Daqian.

Hanging on two walls in the Hall of Seven Buddhas are four wooden plaques inscribed with the "Hymns on Seven Buddhas" in the handwriting of Huang Tianjian, a famed figure of letter and calligrapher of the Song Dynasty. In the rear of the hall stands a 2.74-meter high porcelain statue of the Buddha, done in graceful lines and well-proportioned configuration,

portraying the Buddha as a robust, sedate man wearing a thousand-Buddha lotus robe. Made in a porcelain-making kiln at Jingdezhen of Jiangxi Province in 1415, the 13th year of the Yongle reign of Ming Dynasty, it is considered as the best of kiln-made porcelain statue of the Buddha in existence. The Ming-dynasty lotus-flower bronze bell hanging in a bell pavilion atop a tiny mountain opposite the Bauguo Temple was 2.8-meter tall and weighs 12,500-kilograms, usually extolled as the "King of Bells of the Land of Abundance".

In the Tripitaka Pavilion of the temple, there are many Buddhist classics, including a huge scroll inscribed with the text of "Wang Youjun's Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection of Poetry" in the handwriting of Zhao Mengfu, and works of famous calligraphers of various dynasties.

The Ming Dynasty beamless brick hall of the Wannian Temple is known to have the best of all brick-and-masonry structures of Mount Emei. Enshrined in the immense space of the brick hall of the Wannian Temple is a bronze statue of Samantabhadra, riding his white elephant. This statue stands 7.35-meter high and weighs 62 tons. For its exquisite craftsmanship, the statue has been put under protection as a key cultural relic of national calibre.

The Fuhu Temple is known for its bronze pagoda which stands in a pavilion to the left of the Mahavira Hall. It is also known as Huayan Pagoda because its walls are inscribed with the 195,048-character text of the Garland Sutra. Standing 5.8 meters in height, it is in the shape of an octagonal pavilion with 13 layers, looking like an overturned urn on a 0.96-meter-high Sumeru pedestal with a door opened into one of its walls. A total of 4,700 Buddhist statues are placed on the pavilion's 13 layers. The top of the Jinding (Golden Top) Mountain is the site of a hall known as Yongming Huazang Temple. Its tiles, pillars, doors, windows and walls are all made of copper mixed with gold and the hall is also called "Gold Top" or "Bronze Hall". During a fire in 1664, the hall was burned down to a tiny fragment of the bronze wall, inscribed with sutra passages and Buddhist picture, which remains to this day, together with a two-meter-high, 0.85-meter-wide bronze tablet. The bronze tablet now housed in the Woyun Nunnery as a precious cultural relic of Mount Emei. It is inscribed with the text of the "Accounts of the Newly Constructed Bronze Hall of Yongminghuazang Temple on the Da'e Mountain", with handwritings of the Tang-dynasty calligrapher Zhu Suiliang.

If Mount Wutai is a cradle of Buddhist culture, then Mount Emei is a symbol of the ideals of Buddhism. The streams at the foot of the mountain, limpid and free from the dust and dun of the mundane world, give people a

soul-cleansing effect. The craggy cliffs, deep valleys, dense woods and exuberant flowers are providing the visitors with a soothing experience. Mount Emei is a classical product of both nature and Buddhist culture and a perfect example of the harmonious relationship between nature and man seeking to return to the embrace of nature.

http://cssa.mit.edu/worldheritage/h_ems.htm

Sixteen hundred years ago, an Indian monk came to Cinisthana, as China was called by the Indians in those days. He climbed to the top of Emei Mountain and was fascinated by the beautiful scenery. “This is the number one mountain in Cinisthana,” he said.

Emei Mountain rises like a green tower on the western Chengdu Plain. Viewed from a distance, the contour of the mountain looks like a girl’s face with slender eyebrows; hence the name Emei, or tall eyebrows. Emei Mountain rises and falls for more than 200 kilometers before it meets Qionglai Mountain, a part of Asia’s Backbone, or the Kunlun Mountain Range. Emei Mountain consists of Da’e, Er’e, San’e, and Si’e hills. Da’e Hill is a concentration of strangely shaped peaks and places of scenic beauty and historic interest. It is the hill most visited by tourists on Emei Mountain.

Of all the tourist attractions in China, Emei Mountain is the highest. Wanfoding (the Summit of Ten Thousand Buddhas), its highest peak, rises 3,099 meters above sea level, much higher than the Five Sacred Mountains: Mount Taishan in Shandong, Mount Hengshan in Hunan, Mount Huashan in Shaanxi, Mount Hengshan in Shanxi, and Mount Songshan in Henan. Legend has it that the Five Sacred Mountains are where the immortals stay.

The craggy southern side of Emei Mountain is crisscrossed by ravines and covered with a dense growth of plants. The northern side features sheer precipices and waterfalls cascading down the mountain slopes.

The mountain is warm and humid with abundant mist and rain. In spring and summer, flowers blossom luxuriantly among a verdant growth of mountain plants. Refined scholars of the past dynasties visited the mountain and wrote many poems in admiration of the enchanting scenery. One of the poems composed by a man of letters during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) reads, “Rising sky high, the lofty Emei Mountain is enveloped in mist and clouds for more than 100 li (50km). Narrow paths zigzag uphill, and the exotic peaks are in the shape of lotus blossoms.”

Jindingxiangguang (the Auspicious Light at the Golden Summit), also called Foguang (Buddha's Halo), tops the list of the ten principal scenic attractions of Emei Mountain. Buddhist followers say it is the light from Buddha's forehead, but others say it is a physical phenomenon. Before sunset after a rain or a snowfall, the sunlight penetrates the mist and clouds and forms a circle of seven colors by refraction through the tiny water drops in the mist. One may feel as though caught in the circle, which seems to move in synchronization with one's own movements, much like one's shadow. For centuries, this phenomenon was enshrouded in mystery, and Buddhists consider it good fortune to visit Emei Mountain and see Buddha's Halo.

Emei Mountain is one of the four famous mountains in China where Buddhist rites are performed. The other three are Wutai Mountain in Shanxi Province, Putuo Mountain in Zhejiang Province, and Jiuhua Mountain in Anhui Province. It is said that Emei Mountain is where the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, one of the two principal disciples of Sakyamuni, mystically appeared and performed Buddhist rites.

Formerly, the mountain was important for both Buddhism and Taoism. In the early days of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), the house of a medicinal herb collector became a temple, the first temple in the mountain. In later dynasties from the Jin (265-420) through the Tang (618-907), the Song (960-1279), the Ming (1368-1644), and the Qing (1644-1911), more than 200 temples on the mountain housed several thousand monks.

With the rise of Buddhism and the decline of Taoism in China, Emei Mountain became a place held sacred by Buddhists. Today, the mountain has more than a dozen temples, still home to many monks. These include the Baoguo (Serving the Country), Wannian (Ten Thousand Years), Xianfeng (Immortal's Peak), Xixiangchi (Elephant Bathing Pond), and Jinding (Golden Summit) temples. Most of them are listed as historical relics under State protection.

Emei Mountain abounds in fauna and flora. There are more than 500 species of plants, many more than in Europe, including over 29 varieties of azaleas as well as the Chinese dove tree, known for its ornamental value. The mountain is the habitat of more than 2,300 species of insects, birds, and wild animals, including the orange oakleaf butterfly, the lesser panda, the honey buzzard, and the silver pheasant. Monkeys often come out to play with tourists or stand by the roadside to beg for food. In 1981, an international botanical team composed of specialists from Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Japan, and five other countries explored the area

and concluded that Emei Mountain is the most beautiful national park in the world, a rare treasure house of plants, and a paradise for plant lovers.

The Leshan Giant Buddha is carved into the face of a cliff on Lingyun Hill, to the east of Emei Mountain, where the Minjiang, Dadu, and Qingyi rivers converge. The statue is not Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, but his disciple Maitreya, who is also a Buddha. It is one of the major scenic attractions in the Emei Mountain Scenic Area of Leshan City.

Lingyun Hill has been known as a scenic spot since the Tang Dynasty. Tradition has it that the turbulent water at the confluence of the three rivers threatened the safety of boats sailing past. Hai Tong, a monk at the Lingyun (Cloud Reaching) Temple, raised funds and organized laborers to carve a giant statue of Maitreya into the cliff in an effort to tame the river with the power of Buddha. The carving began in 713 and lasted for 90 years. The artisans skilfully cut a hidden channel to drain rainwater and built the Giant Buddha Pavilion, a 13-story wooden structure, to protect the statue from weathering.

The Giant Buddha sits in a solemn manner and overlooks the three rivers. The statue is 71 meters high and ten meters across. The head is 14.7 meters high, and each of the feet is 11 meters long and 5.5 meters wide. More than 100 people can sit around the statue. It is the largest stone-carved Maitreya in the world.

The splendid Giant Buddha Pavilion was ruined during various wars. In the several hundred years since the Ming period, the carved statue has suffered serious erosion from exposure to rain and wind. In 1962, the Chinese government earmarked funds for an all-round maintenance of the Giant Buddha. Later, the Giant Buddha was listed as a major historical relic under State protection. At present, The Giant Buddha is being maintained under the sponsorship of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee and under the guidance of experts from China and abroad.

<http://web.singnet.com.sg/~tanwc2/sichuan2/emei.htm>

Emei Shan ("shan" means mount in Chinese) to me, and many less religious Chinese round the world as well, is the abode of beautiful nuns well skilled in Chinese martial arts, as portrayed in numerous martial arts movies and novels. To the more devoted, however, Mt Emei is one of the four holy mountains of Buddhism in China (the other three are the Wutai Mountains in Shanxi Province, the Putuo Mountains in Zhejiang Province

and the Jiuhua Mountains in Anhui). In fact, according to May Holdsworth (Odyssey Illustrated Guide to Sichuan),

“Emei Shan is more than a mountain; it is a frame of mind. That is not just because looking up at monumental heights induces in the beholder a sense of his own frailty and insignificance. It is also because for centuries Chinese belief has endowed Nature with a mystical influence on man’s character, and Nature is supremely exemplified by mountains. Mixed up with this tradition was the ancient folk belief that mountains were the magical habitations of immortals. Although Taoist in origin, these ideas have been gathered into the Chinese Buddhist’s view of the universe like much else of the indigenous cult.”

And as the book continues, it wasn’t clear when and why Mt Emei was venerated in the first place. The first temples here are Taoist but eventually became Buddhist, and not just merely Buddhist - but Buddhist holy mountains, with thousands coming here on pilgrimage. An explanation I read on a website says that Emei Shan has “a Buddhist heritage that can be traced back to the Eastern Han Dynasty under the reign of Emperor Ming (58-75).

One day a hermit called Pugong was collecting medicinal herbs in Emei Shan when he suddenly saw a man with a halo around his head flying over on the back of a white elephant. Awe-stricken, Pugong followed the man to the summit where he found nothing but fleeting purplish clouds. Then he went to the Western Region (Xinjiang region, from where Buddhism spread from India to China) to consult an abbot who told him that the man he saw was the holy person of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (a Buddhist deity). Back to Emei Shan, Pugong converted his residence into a temple for worshipping Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. This became the first temple ever built in Emei Shan. There used to be more than 70 temples in Emei Shan when Buddhism was prevailing in China. To date, a dozen of them are still functioning” [Words in italics are added by me.]

The ascent up Emei Shan is a difficult one. At 3,099m above sea level, the hike up passing only the main monasteries and temples (Baoguo Si - Qingyin Ge - Wannian Si - Huayan Ding - Baiyun Si - Jieyin Dian - Jinding), is 40 to 50 km one way. Pilgrims used to take 2 days up and 2 days downhill, even on a quick pilgrimage (and well, in the old days of devotion, many stayed much longer, visiting the countless temples of the holy mountain). A guidebook says tourists can try doing it in 3 days altogether. But modern tourism have found a way out for tourists on the rush. Buses now travel from the foothills at Baoguo Si to Wannian Si at 1020m, and to Jieyin Hall (2640m) from where one can take a cable car to the summit at

Jinding (Golden Summit), 3,075m. At the moment, the highest peak, Wanfoding (Peak of Ten Thousand Buddhas), 3099m, is still unreachable.

We arrived at Emei Shan in the late afternoon and quickly left our luggage at the Hongzhushan Guesthouse where Chiang Kai Shek once stayed (- a nice, quiet place, the Generalissimo sure knows where to build his villas), before making a brief visit to Baoguo Si (Temple of Dedication to the Nation). At the gateway, we were overwhelmed by a large number of hawkers and touts, anxious to get us to buy their assortment of souvenirs, maps, snacks, etc and also to take photos with the legendary monkeys of Emei Shan. The rest of Sichuan had appeared to be devoid of tourists (when compared to international tourism cities like London, NY, Hong Kong or Singapore) but in Emei Shan, the only industry seemed to be tourism, or rather, in the older days, religious tourism. And the locals appeared to have only one preoccupation - that of servicing tourists.

This mountainous region, lacking in fertile soil and minerals, would have been unimaginably poor (like so many such parts of China) if not for tourism. And as for the Baoguo Si, its most renowned treasure is a 2.4 metre tall porcelain Buddha, made in the 15th century. Apart from that, the most notable thing about this temple is its beautiful setting at the foothills of Emei Shan. The cool, misty climate, together with the surrounding ancient trees, all add a very mysterious and holy feel about the whole place. Perhaps it was such an environment which created a perfect venue for sages and mystics to settle here, and thus leading to the evolvement of Emei Shan as a pilgrimage site.

After Baoguo, we visited Qingyin Ge (Clear Sound Pavilion), a traditional Chinese pavilion and temple standing across running mountain streams. The pavilion was no big deal although the long walk there is through one of Emei Shan's most scenic spots, with little mountain hamlets and tiny shrines along the way. But not all was as innocent and holy as it seemed, as my host pointed out a few ordinary-looking buildings and commented that they are brothels, and that the two friendly and pretty ladies who were chatting with us earlier were actually "xiao jie" (or prostitutes ; although the same term may also mean a young lady, but when used in certain context refers to lady of the night). Alas, even human decadence has reached these remote and holy mountains.

The Wan Nian Temple is one of the most ancient temples on the Emei Mountain, situated in the place with 1,020 meters elevation on the Emei Mountain, Sichuan Province.

Built in Jin Dynasty, the Wan Nian Temple was called “Samantabhadra Temple” originally and changed to “the White Water Temple” in Tang Dynasty and “the White Water Samantabhadra Temple” in Song Dynasty, until Ming Dynasty it was called “the Wan Nian Temple” till present. Originally the construction scale of this temple was quite grand and its history was the longest and it was the grandest temple on the Emei Mountain. It is very pity that in 1946 it suffered a big fire, the beautiful wood temple halls were burnt completely and only the brick palace built with bricks in Ming Dynasty left. Later in 1953 two temples were rebuilt and the brick palace was also called “Beamless Hall”.

The Beamless Hall is 16 meters high and 15.7 meters long. Its walls, window altices and arcs are all built with bricks and stones. Inside the hall a bronze statue of Samantabhadra Buddha riding on a

white elephant is enshrined, built with bronze, 7.35 meters high and 62 tons weigh. There are closets for enshrining God Buddha on the four walls inside the hall, divided into two parts, the lower part has 24 closets enshrined an iron Buddha inside them respectively, the upper part has 6 horizontal God cupboards put 307 smaller bronze Buddha statues. The smaller bronze Buddha and the iron Buddha are all worthy to appreciate, solemn, auspicious and happy.

It is said that there is a kind of special small frog on the Emei Mountain in the rectangle pond at the right side inside the Wan Nian Temple. In quiet evening, they will release pleasant sound all the year. All who have heard the sound describe this kind of frog as “Playing Instrument Frog”. The Playing Instrument Frog is belonging to the Emei Special Product that it is difficult to hear as the God Light on the Emei Mountain. These all make the visitors take delight in talking about, are you interested in coming here and having a travel of the Emei Mountain to appreciate the Emei Special Products?



HAN-SHAN AND SHIH-TE

Two poet-monks of Japan, Han-Shan and Shih-te, are, despite their ragged, unkempt appearance, considered in some traditions to be incarnations of Monju (Manjushri in Japanese Buddhism) and Fugen (Samantabhadra). Han-Shan/Monju is usually shown with a scroll, representing wisdom, while Shih-Te/Fugen is most often shown with a broom, representing practice or wordly action.

This tradition is repeated in *Fugen*, a novel Ishikawa Jun, translated into English as *The Bodhisattva or Samantabhadra* by William Jefferson Tyler.

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Manjushri and Samantabhadra are often associated, representing different sides of the historical Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching. In fact, they are often portrayed with the Buddha as a sort of "trinity." Manjushri is typically shown on the right side, representing Shakyamuni's wisdom. He is mounted on a lion, the king of beasts, and carries in one hand a sword to cut rough delusion.

Samantabhadra is shown on the left side. He is the Bodhisattva of practice, aiding and instructing in all places, high and low. Samantabhadra is the final teacher in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, where his ten vows deal not so

much with abstract wisdom as with all aspects of human experience. When he is not on his elephant, he is often represented with his right hand in the Vitarka Mudra (the hand raised with the thumb and index touching).

* * *

A less pleasant association of the two bodhisattvas is with the two nuclear reactors named Monju and Fugen located in Fukui Prefecture. Fugen had to be closed down, a process which cost more than the original construction.



DEDICATION OF MERIT

*Just as the sublime sage Samantabhadra
Dedicated all pure practice of body speech and mind
To the attainment of a pure state and pure realms
So do I now dedicate the fruit of all my efforts.*

* * *

*May any small merits that may have amassed
By thus prostrating, making offerings, confessing, rejoicing
And asking the Buddhas to remain and teach the Dharma
Be dedicated now to supreme and perfect Enlightenment.*



ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is a compilation of Internet resources. The URL's are valid as of March 2004, CE.

Although this book is dedicated to the members of E-Sangha, it must be stressed that there is no connection between that organization or its website and this book, aside from the editor's gratitude to the participants in the ongoing online discussion.

The book was created with Microsoft Word and converted to Adobe PDF format using free programs downloaded from <http://www.pdf995.com>.

The first draft of this book was completed March 14, 2004, the festival of Samantabhadra.

***Be kind to the beasts:
you never know
which is a bodhisattva's mount.***

***Be kind to strangers:
you never know
who is a bodhisattva.***